



2015 SESSION

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Business Page

[Signed by Chairman]

Roll Call

Standing Committee Reports

Tabled Bills

Fiscal Reports

Rolls Call Votes

Proxy Forms

Visitor Registrations

***Any other documents, which were submitted after the committee hearing has ended and/or was submitted late [within 48 hours], regarding information in the committee hearing.**

***Witness Statements that were not presented as exhibits.**

Montana Historical Society Archives

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2015 Legislative

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BUSINESS REPORT

**MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
64th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**

HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, February 9, 2015
Place: Capitol

Time: 3:00 PM
Room: 172

BILLS and RESOLUTIONS HEARD:

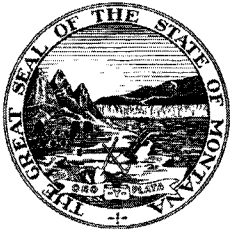
HB 386 - Revise laws on sale to or exchange of park land with public entities - Rep. Zach Brown
SB 49 - Expand use of petroleum mixing zones - Sen. Jim Keane
SB 88 - Establish contracting laws for conservation districts - Sen. John Brenden

EXECUTIVE ACTION TAKEN: None

Comments:



REP. Kerry White, Chair



The Big Sky Country

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NAT. RESOURCES COMMITTEE

ROLL CALL

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT/EXCUSED
REP. ED LIESER, VICE CHAIRMAN	✓	
REP. JERRY BENNETT	✓	
REP. BOB BROWN	✓	
REP. ZACH BROWN	✓	
REP. VIRGINIA COURT	✓	
REP. MARY ANN DUNWELL		✓
REP. STEVE FITZPATRICK, VICE CHAIRMAN		✓
REP. KELLY FLYNN	✓	
REP. THERESA MANZELLA	✓	
REP. NATE MCCONNELL		✓
REP. DALE MORTENSEN	✓	
REP. MARK NOLAND	✓	
REP. ANDREA OLSEN	✓	
REP. KEITH REGIER		✓
REP. RAY SHAW	✓	
REP. SCOTT STAFFANSON	✓	
REP. KATHLEEN WILLIAMS	✓	
REP. KERRY WHITE, CHAIR	✓	

18 MEMBERS

MONTANA House of Representatives Visitors Register

Monday, February 9, 2015

HB 386 - Revise laws on sale to or exchange of park land with public entities

Sponsor: **Rep. Zach Brown**

PLEASE PRINT

[illegible]

Please leave prepared testimony with Secretary. Witness Statement forms are available if you care to submit written testimony.

MONTANA House of Representatives Visitors Register

Monday, February 9, 2015

SB 49 - Expand use of petroleum mixing zones

Sponsor: **Sen. Jim Keane**

PLEASE PRINT

[illegible]

Please leave prepared testimony with Secretary. Witness Statement forms are available if you care to submit written testimony.

MONTANA House of Representatives Visitors Register

Monday, February 9, 2015

SB 88 - Establish contracting laws for conservation districts

Sponsor: **Sen. John Brenden**

PLEASE PRINT

[illegible]

Please leave prepared testimony with Secretary. Witness Statement forms are available if you care to submit written testimony.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Jeff Wivholm and I am the President of the Montana Association of Conservation Districts.
For the record my name is spelled WIVHOLM.

The Conservation Districts were formed after the dust bowl in order to conserve our soil and water. We have a long standing tradition of doing so through a variety of different projects and programs over the years. The majority of districts do not have sufficiently large budgets to dictate high levels of contracting. This bill will make the districts that are pursuing larger contracts more efficient by allowing the same contracting levels as the counties currently enjoy. We hope that you support this bill and all the work Conservation Districts undertake as a whole.

Thank you,

Jeff Wivholm



February 4, 2015

Members of the House Natural Resources Committee
2015 Montana Legislature

Dear Representatives,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Sweet Grass County Conservation District - Board of Supervisors in support of Senate Bill No. 88 which will be heard before your Committee on Monday afternoon.

The genesis of this legislation is the result of a resolution passed by our Board and approved by the Montana Association of Conservation Districts. The purpose of this bill is to correct the omission of Montana Conservation Districts from public procurement law updated two years ago by the Legislature.

Senate Bill 77, introduced by Senator Brenden in 2013, generally revised public contract competitive bidding law. The main goal of SB-77 was to raise the threshold required for competitive bidding of publically funded construction projects from \$50 thousand to \$80 thousand. The result of that Legislation was a simplification of the procurement process and took into consideration the increase of costs caused by inflationary factors.

The revision did not however, include Montana Conservation Districts, which are considered political subdivisions of the State, and should be included in the list of governing bodies outlined in state statute. Those bodies include cities, counties, school districts and other entities.

Revising existing procurement law to include Montana Conservation Districts will provide many much needed benefits for Conservation Districts across the State, including the Sweet Grass Conservation District (SGCD).

In the past six years, the Sweet Grass Conservation District has sponsored and managed, on average, one project per year within our district which have cost between 50 and 80 thousand dollars. We estimate the extra costs involved with our having to go out for the full competitive bidding process easily consumes an additional \$2000 to \$2500 in expenses. Project delays are also caused by the time needed to comply with the competitive bidding process.

As an example, we sponsored an Irrigation Diversion Rehabilitation Project in 2013, which was funded by the Montana DNRC – Renewable Resources Grant program. Funding was available for this project following the beginning of the State's fiscal year in July of that year and after the

SGCD had fully executed contracts in place with Montana DNRC, we were able to begin the process of contracting a professional engineer to provide final design and develop the project bid manual for potential contractors.

Given the large workload that DNRC contract officials are usually dealing with at the beginning of a new fiscal year and hundreds of new project contracts, we were delayed for two months before we could contract our project engineer.

Then we were faced with an additional 30 day delay caused by the full competitive bid process, which put us into October and then unable to begin the project during those ideal low-water flow river conditions because of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks requirements that all in-stream work be completed before October 15th due to the brown trout spawning season.

So, our project did not begin construction until late January of the following year, which was a risk we had to take despite winter weather conditions, because we needed to consider early spring rainbow trout spawning and high water flows caused by spring runoff.

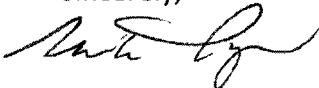
Needless to say, if we could have circumvented the timely and expensive competitive bid process and been able to procure a contractor thru the allowable "Limited Solicitation" process, we would have easily had this project completed before the October 15th deadline, saving valuable time and resources!

Our purpose in proposing the changes outlined in Senate Bill No. 88 are simply to put Conservation Districts on par with other governmental entities in Montana, allowing us a more expedient process with contracting construction projects saving taxpayer dollars and Conservation District Resources.

We are grateful to Senator Brenden for sponsoring this bill and to the Montana Association of Conservation Districts and DNRC Administrative staff for helping us propose this Legislation, guiding our efforts to include Conservation Districts in the updated State procurement policy statutes.

We appreciate your consideration of this Legislation and urge your support to pass Senate Bill No. 88.

Sincerely,



Mark Thompson, Vice-Chairman
On behalf of:
The Board of Supervisors
Sweet Grass Conservation District